

Appl. No. 09/975,537  
Amtd. Dated October 8, 2003  
Reply to Office action of May 12, 2003

REMARKS

Applicant's undersigned counsel thanks Examiner Nguyen for her careful examination of the present application, and also for the very helpful and productive personal interview conducted at the USPTO on September 9, 2003 during which claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 were discussed in view of the cited references.

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 10 have been amended, and new claim 13 has been added to more clearly describe the invention. No new matter has been entered. Claims 2 and 7 are canceled without prejudice.

The claims and abstract have been amended to cancel reference numerals therefrom in conformity with U.S. practice.

Claims 1-12 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious over Monopoli in view of Bayles et al.

During the interview, Applicant pointed out, and the Examiner agreed, that neither of the cited references discloses or suggests the conduction zone and the support zone being "in adhesion free contact" as recited in claims 2 and 7. This limitation has now been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 6 respectively, and claims 2 and 7 have been canceled. Accordingly, as agreed during the interview, it is submitted these claims are now in condition for allowance over the cited references.

It was also pointed out during the interview that neither of the cited references discloses or suggests a filament having a cross-sectional area wherein "at least 5% and less than 20%" of the cross-sectional area forms part of the support

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zone. Claims 6 and 10 have now been amended (claim 10 being rewritten in independent form) to recite this limitation. Therefore, also as agreed during the interview, it is submitted claims 6 and 10 are now allowable over the cited references because neither of the cited references discloses or suggests a filament having a cross-sectional area, "at least 5% and less than 20%" of which forms part of the support zone as now recited in claims 6 and 10.

Therefore, it is now submitted, and the Examiner has agreed, that based on the limitations added respectively to claims 1, 5, 6 and 10, these claims are now allowable over the cited references. All remaining claims are dependent claims and are thus also submitted to be allowable as such.

Should the Examiner have any questions or concerns with respect to the instant submission, she is invited to please contact the undersigned at the phone number listed below.

If there are any additional fees not mentioned above resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 34049.

Respectfully submitted,  
PEARNE & GORDON LLP

By:



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Date: October 8, 2003